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SPORT

By Billy Evans

His baseball improved during the last 25 years? Yes and no. In some respects, yes, made decided improvement in the way it was played. But in other respects, no. There is no easier way to start an argument than to tell some star player of a score of years back that the game is much faster. That is his cue to open up and believe me, his point of light on his side.

Several years ago a Boston newspaper conceived the idea of having a number of former outstanding stars, many of them favorites, return to that city for an oldsters game. It was one of the most interesting affairs ever staged. In that game were such former greats as Larry Ladd, Bill Bradley, Jimmy Archer, Cy Young, Jimmy Collins, greatest of all third basemen, Ed Dwyer, Rip Sewell and many others. Some of the players were men who had started in the majors 25 years back.

It was my good fortune to be sampling in Boston where those old-time stars were gathering for this game. For a week, each day would bring four or five back to the scenes of their former triumphs, when their names were a daily feature of the sport page headlines. Some of them indulged in short workouts in an effort to limber up a bit.

At dinner or sitting around the lobby of the hotel, I made it a point to discuss with most of the veterans the present day style as contrasted to that of the past. A number of the old time stars were coo students of the game; played on their in their day gained much of their success because of keen minds.

It might be supposed they were holed in their opinion. I didn't find them that way. Most of them were frank to admit that in certain respects there had been improvement, a good many were willing to believe that perhaps it was about fifty-fifty, but not a single player expressed the opinion that the game of today was an improvement. In any way over the attitude of ball they played a score or more years back.

"It looks to me as if the players playing for long drives have taken much away from the game," remarked the great Jimmie Collins, reverently cupped to be the greatest third baseman of all times. "I notice that most every player tries to hit the line and takes a healthy cut every time he swings."

"I understand the ball is much livelier and home runs much easier to make, so no doubt that explains the take a healthy swing system so indulged in by all players today. Not a single player in all the games I saw choked up on his bat and tried to place his hits. Not one player tried to beat out a hit. I saw only two bases stolen in six games. No player tried a delayed steal. Not a single double was attempted."

"I have always believed that playing for one run gained for much more inside stuff than trying to get runs in clusters. Apparently one run or even a two run lead is not considered much of a margin these days."

"In our day one of the greatest offensive tactics was the steal. Pitchers paid close attention to the base runners particularly men on first. Developing a movement that could drive the runner back or make him stick close to the base, was considered a most necessary asset for each pitcher."

"Undoubtedly all players, fired by the fame that came to Babe Ruth as the result of his ability to make home runs, took up the Ruth style of always taking a healthy swing at the ball. But after all there is only one Ruth. Players like him come to the game about one in every 25 years or more. Baseball is still a great game, but no better, but no more than in our days." The thoughts of the thinking young Jimmy Collins expressed the feeling of every old time player.

LETTY GROVE POSSESSES TWO ADMIRABLE BASEBALL ASSETS
—U—
Robert Moses (Lefty) Grove could not be bought now for twice the price he cost Connie Mack—\$10,000 and a record for pitching talent anywhere.

Connie has managed some of the game's greatest southpaws, among

HEARD ON THE STREET

It was a good many years ago that Deacon Callahan took his wife to the races.

Just as the horses were lining up at the barrier, Mrs. Callahan grumbled the deacon's nervous by the way and in a voice which was fairly well known asked him for a money pin, meanwhile grabbing frantically after something that seemed to be slipping around the corner.

Just then some one nearby shouted "They're off!" and Mrs. Callahan was satisfied.

Rural Doctor (meeting patient)—"I've—er—taken the liberty of sending in my little account again."

Patient—Is that not well? Acting on your advice, I'm avoiding worries for the present."

The bride and groom arrived at a fashionable hotel on their honeymoon.

Then Babe Waddell and Eddie Plank, but the veteran pilot of the A's seems in a fair way to get more and better service from Grove than any of the others. Perhaps the reason is that Grove has the speed, the arm, the speed, the control and easy-going temperament of Plank, a rare combination.

Grove seems certain to sustain the spring suggestion that 1921 would be the best year. The team left under his lead in the American league.

He was around the 29 mark in his statistics by the middle of August, with six weeks in which to beat his best record of 21 triumphs, made in 1928 when he closed his career as the first American league pitcher to reach 30 victories since

the fire-bait star's great mid-summer work was a lot to do for the commanding lead seized by the Athletics, just when it looked as though they might be extended to repeat their pennant victory.

McGRAW LUCKY WITH FIRST BASEMEN
—U—

First base seems to be a lucky position for Javy McGraw, since he became manager of the Giants back in the good old days of 1902, first base has given him more worry than any other position on his ball club. When he quit, McGraw said that year went to New York, he brought along Mc Gann and "Dangerous Dan" in his day was one of the best first basemen in the country.

At the present moment, McGraw's first baseman is none other than William Harold Terry, who property was of Memphis, Tenn. in between McGraw and Terry there were Fred Tenney, Fred Merkle, Walter Holke, Hal Chase and Long George Kelly.

Of these great first basemen only Tenney and Chase failed to play on a McGraw pennant winning team. McGraw was at first base when the "Master Mind" won his first pennant in 1901 and again in 1905, the year that Terry pitched three straight shut out games against the Athletics in the World's series. After 1905, McGraw did not win again until 1921.

Merkle, who lost the pennant in 1904 by failing to knock second base against the Cubs, was the first baseman on the pennant winning teams of 1911, 1912 and 1913. Holke was at first base when McGraw and the Giants won in 1917, while Kelly was a member of the famous team that established a new record for the "Master Mind" by winning four straight pennants, 1921, 1922, 1923, and 1924.

Of McGraw's first basemen Chase, of course, was a marvelous fielder and was ranked by many smart baseball men as the greatest first baseman of all times. Tenney was another wonderful fielder while McGraw and Merkle were both steady and sure, but neither was as spectacular as Chase or Tenney. Kelly was another spectacular first baseman because of his height, long reach and his powerful throwing arm.

As for Terry, he is just about the best first baseman at the present time. McGraw says so, and so do a lot of other baseball players who have played and fought against "Moose" Bill. Not so powerful as a batter as Jimmy Fox of the World's champion Athletics, Terry is one of the best hitters in the city or country, and is far ahead of his rival first baseman in fielding.

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